



# Network Bulletin

## 12 November 2020

We realise that our Bulletins have been infrequent throughout 2020. Due to the changes in how the Network has had to operate over the previous 7 months, maintaining the schedule of posting our fortnightly bulletins has been difficult to maintain. As things are now settling and returning to a relative state of normalcy, we hope that the fortnight frequency can now be maintained. With that, welcome back to our fortnightly bulletin.

If you are unable to open any links or attachments, please contact the Network on 6230 5796 or email [actmhcncn@actmhcncn.org.au](mailto:actmhcncn@actmhcncn.org.au).

Of particular note in this bulletin, the Network would like to draw your attention to the following:

- Reminder of the Networks' Annual General Meeting
- FREE My Rights, My Decisions workshop;
- Applications open for the 2021 ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme;
- Lived Experience Leadership research project; and
- Changes to visitor arrangements at health facilities.

### **ACT PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT: Possible thunderstorm asthma event over the next two days**

**Today the ACT Health Directorate is warning of the potential for a thunderstorm asthma event in the ACT region on Thursday, 12 November and Friday, 13 November 2020.**

**The warning comes as we see elevated pollen levels and the possibility of severe thunderstorms over the next two days, increasing the risk of a thunderstorm asthma event.**

**Thunderstorm asthma can be triggered by a combination of high grass pollen levels and a particular type of thunderstorm, which causes some people to develop severe asthma symptoms over a short period of time.**

**[Click here for more information from ACT Health.](#)**

## Contents

<b>1. Network update</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.1 Office operations .....	2
1.2 Online Drop-In .....	3
1.3 ACTMHCN Annual General Meeting 2020.....	4
1.5 My Rights My Decisions Workshop.....	5
<b>2. For Your Information</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 A conversation for everyone: Advance Care Planning .....	5
2.2 Free Health Seminar - How to Stretch Your Health Dollar .....	6
2.3 Improving health information designed for consumers and carers .....	6
2.4 ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme.....	6
2.5 Community Services #1 Food Pantry.....	7
2.6 Research Project: Activating Lived Experience Leadership – Online Survey .....	7
<b>3. Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) information</b> .....	<b>8</b>
3.1 COVID-19 ACT Website .....	8
3.2 COVID-19 Testing Clinics .....	8
3.3 Changed visitor arrangements at ACT’s health facilities .....	9
3.4 CARE Financial Inc - Help during COVID 19 .....	10
3.5 Mental Health and COVID-19 Support Services .....	10
3.6 Canberra COVID Legal Help .....	11

## 1. Network update

### 1.1 Office operations

From Monday 9 November 2020, staff began returning to work at the Networks’ office on a staggered roster for at least one day per week, whilst also working remotely. This arrangement will be in place until the end of 2020.

We can still be contacted on our main phone number (02) 6230 5796 or 0449 127 940 (up to 3pm Monday to Thursday). As an alternative you can contact staff direct on the numbers and emails listed below for the following purposes. Please be advised that these phones are turned off at the end of each working day and on non-work days.

Consumer Representation	<a href="mailto:representation@actmhc.org.au">representation@actmhc.org.au</a>	0449 127 941
-------------------------	--	--------------

Policy	<a href="mailto:policy@actmhc.org.au">policy@actmhc.org.au</a>	0424 468 620
Education	<a href="mailto:education@actmhc.org.au">education@actmhc.org.au</a>	0408 069 423

The Network is still being asked for consumer input on policies. So please regularly check your email for invitations to comment. Consultations on policy matters with consumers and other forums etc. are now being held online via Zoom. If you are interested in commenting on policy but do not use email, please contact the Isobel on 0424 468 620 or email [policy@actmhc.org.au](mailto:policy@actmhc.org.au) to let her know, so she can send you any documents.

## 1.2 Online Drop-In

The Network continues with our online Drop-In service every Thursday from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Anyone who wants to join can enter at any time while the session is open.

There are two ways to join the online Drop-In: via internet or calling in. The details are below. As an added security level introduced by Zoom, a password is required to join.

### Joining via internet

Zoom is available for computers and mobile devices. If you haven't used Zoom before, when clicking on the meeting link below, you will be prompted to download and install Zoom. From there, you can enter your name, the session password and join in. Zoom has some functions like virtual backgrounds, so you can join in from anywhere without breaking any physical distancing and isolation rules.

To join the Online Drop-In, click on, or type/copy and paste into your browser, the following link and enter the required password

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84043322259?pwd=SmhLZUN6cnUxdnJpcjB3SGh2K1lWZz09>

Meeting ID: 840 4332 2259

Password: 357520

It should be noted that the quality of the video is dependent on the quality of the internet service you use.

### Joining via telephone

If you don't have internet access, you can still join by calling in to the session and again entering your name and password. Phone number options are listed below. While you won't be able to see other participants, you can still talk and hear others. Please note standard call charges may apply, depending on your phone plan.

One tap mobile

+61370182005,,84043322259#,,#,357520# Australia

+61731853730,,84043322259#,,#,357520# Australia

Dial by your location

+61 2 8015 6011 Australia

We look forward to seeing and talking with members during Drop-In.

### 1.3 ACTMHCN Annual General Meeting 2020

A reminder that the 2020 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 11am- 12:30pm on Tuesday 17 November 2020. In these unusual times, this year's AGM will be held electronically via Zoom (details below), and voting will take place securely via Survey Monkey which will allow instant results and therefore reduce the time needed for elections to be finalised.

Topic: 2020 Annual General Meeting

Time: Nov 17, 2020 11:00AM-12:30PM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86862498896?>

pwd=Y25hL3VXWVN5dEdzVG5vY3oyZXN5UT09

Dial by your location

+61 2 8015 6011 Australia

Meeting ID: 868 6249 8896

Passcode: 413330

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcjhcQulnQ>

**Primary Members who participate in the AGM will receive a \$20 gift card to cover their internet/phone charges. To be eligible for a gift card, a member must be present from 11am-12pm. Members who join but leave before 12pm will not be eligible for a gift card as the first hour is when all of the decisions and voting will be completed therefore participation is important. Gift cards will be mailed or emailed to eligible members in the week following the AGM.**

We welcome nominations from any member who would like to share and expand upon their skills. In particular, we encourage new members to nominate as an excellent way to learn more about the Network and engage with consumers. A reminder to Associate Members that under the current Constitution we are able to accept nominations from Associate Members.

If you are considering nominating for a role and would like more information about what it means to be a Board member at the Network or you are perhaps having trouble finding a member to second your form, please feel free to get in touch by phone: 02 6230 5796, email: [actmhcn@actmhcn.org.au](mailto:actmhcn@actmhcn.org.au) or text: 0449 127 940 and we will be pleased to assist as much as we can.

### Key Dates

	Due Date	Contact details
RSVP's	Monday 16 November 2020	<a href="mailto:actmch@actmhcn.org.au">actmch@actmhcn.org.au</a> or call on (02) 6230 5796 or SMS to 0408 274 053
Nomination	3pm Monday 16 November 2020	Email: <a href="mailto:agm@actmhcn.org.au">agm@actmhcn.org.au</a>

<b>Forms</b>	<b>with NO EXCEPTIONS</b>	Postal: ACTMHCN, Reply Paid 469, Civic Square ACT 2608 (please keep in mind that mail delivery is currently taking longer than usual)
<b>Proxy Forms</b>	11am Tuesday 17 November 2020	Deliver to: Mail Box 2.11 ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, located on the Ground Floor of the Griffin Centre (mailboxes are located on the righthand side of the left corridor).

## 1.5 My Rights My Decisions Workshop

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Network has an upcoming FREE My Rights My Decisions Workshop.

Friday 27 November 2020, 1pm-3pm, Online via Zoom

The Network is explaining the use of the My Rights My Decisions form kit for mental health consumers who wish to have a say in their own treatment and care. It covers things like supported decision making, decision-making capacity, Advance Agreements, Advance Consent Directions, and Nominated Person. These sound difficult, but the My Rights My Decisions workshop helps to make them simple and easy to understand to help you express your rights and decisions.

If you are interested in participating in this workshop, please contact Jenny by email to [peer.education@actmhc.org.au](mailto:peer.education@actmhc.org.au) or call (02) 6230 5796

## 2. For Your Information

### 2.1 A conversation for everyone: Advance Care Planning

An Advance Care Health Plan ensures your values and preferences are respected when you can't voice your decisions. This could be due to a stroke, a car accident or other health issue. Learn the steps to make a plan, tips for having the conversation about your wishes and find out who can help to get your plan in place.

Date: 10.30am – 12.00pm Monday, 16 November 2020

Venue: By Zoom. Link sent on registration. Zoom support provided.

RSVP: Thursday 12 November to [reps@hcca.org.au](mailto:reps@hcca.org.au) or phone: 6230 7800.

FREE – All Welcome



## 2.2 Free Health Seminar - How to Stretch Your Health Dollar

Find out:

- how to obtain free or cheap medical services
- how to save money on medicines
- why health literacy is important
- share tips with others.

Date: 7.00pm – 9:00pm, Tuesday 17 November 2020

Venue: By Zoom. Link sent on registration. Zoom support provided.

Register: by Friday 13 November to [reps@hcca.org.au](mailto:reps@hcca.org.au) or phone: 6230 7800  
FREE – All Welcome

For more information on this or other free health seminars provided by Health Care Consumers' Association ACT contact: [reps@hcca.org.au](mailto:reps@hcca.org.au) or phone: 6230 7800.

## 2.3 Improving health information designed for consumers and carers

The Canberra Health Literacy Network invites you to join us for a webinar to explore how to write informative and engaging health information for consumers and carers and how to partner with consumers to meet their information needs.

Details of the event are:

Topic: **Improving health information designed for consumers and carers**

Speaker: Associate Professor Sophie Hill, Centre for Health Communication and Participation, La Trobe University

Date: **Thursday 26 November 2020**

Time: **2.00-2.55pm**

Location: WebEx (link will be provided on registration)

RSVP: [Registrations](#) via Eventbrite

The [Canberra Health Literacy Network](#) is an initiative of the Health Care Consumers' Association with support from the ACT Health Directorate.

Please feel free to distribute this invitation within your networks.

Please contact HCCA if you would like more information via [adminofficer@hcca.org.au](mailto:adminofficer@hcca.org.au).

## 2.4 ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme is a partnership between ACT Health, CIT and ACT Mental Health Consumer Network. It is designed to support mental health consumers to study in the community services area. The aim of the scheme is to increase employment opportunities for mental health consumers in mental health, alcohol and other drugs, community development, youth work and community services.

Anyone who has lived experience of a mental illness/disorder and is 17 years of age or older is eligible to apply for admission to the scholarship scheme. Preference will be given to applicants who have not completed post-secondary studies and/or are unemployed.

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme is a two staged approach to support mental health consumers gain qualifications in the area of human services.

- The first stage of the scheme is funding for the completion of the Statement of Attainment in Introductory Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs. This qualification will work towards a Certificate IV within the community services package.

- The second stage is funding that covers course fees only for study in one of the Certificate IV courses in the Community Work Programs.

These are run by the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) at CIT Bruce.

Approximately 25 scholarships are available. The scholarship is valid for two years.

This scholarship scheme is available to Australian residents and citizens. Please note international students are not eligible.

To be eligible for consideration, you must complete the Scholarship Application Form (attached) in full and send to the Canberra Institute of Technology. Applications will be considered and assessed by a selection committee. Interviews may also be conducted. The decision by the selection committee is final and appeals will not be accepted.

This opportunity is being offered in two rounds:

<b>Round</b>	<b>Applications Due by</b>	<b>Selection Committee Meeting</b>
1	4 December	Week commencing 7 December
2	22 Jan 2021	Week commencing 25 January 2021

All applicants will be notified about the outcome of their application in writing within two weeks of the selection committee meetings.

## 2.5 Community Services #1 Food Pantry

The Food Pantry run by Community Services #1 remains open and is welcoming new clients. To be eligible to access this service clients must possess a healthcare card. Please continue to call Reception on 6126 4700 to book your weekly pantry shop.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> September the new opening hours will be:

Monday: 1pm - 4pm

Tuesday: 1pm - 4pm

Wednesday: 10am - 4pm

Thursday: 10am - 4pm

Friday: 10am - 1pm

## 2.6 Research Project: Activating Lived Experience Leadership – Online Survey

Do you currently hold (or have you in the past) a leadership role in mental health lived experience or have a high interest in this area? Are you active in leading change in your

community as an advocate, community speaker, representative or peer worker? If so, you may be interested in participating in an online survey.

Researchers at the University of South Australia are currently exploring the best ways to define mental health lived experience leadership, and how it can be better recognised and used for systems change across the health sector and community.

This project is based in South Australia. The online survey is open to leaders who are in other states and territories.

If you would like to know more, please contact one of the research team or read the study information sheet (attached)

- Ms Heather McIntyre: E: Heather.McIntyre@unisa.edu.au;  
P: 08 8302 1132;
- Dr Mark Loughhead: E: Mark.Loughhead@unisa.edu.au;  
P: 08 8302 1267;
- Ms Ellie Hodges: E: ehodges@lelan.org.au;  
M: 0422 888 157.

To access the survey click on the following link: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/ALELOnlineSurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ALELOnlineSurvey)

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia

### 3. Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) information

#### 3.1 COVID-19 ACT Website

The ACT Health Directorate has a website specific to COVID-19 in the ACT. This website includes Public Health Alerts, prevention guidelines, information on supports and resources etc. as well as information on the current testing criteria. The website can be accessed at the following link <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au>.

Information about COVID-19 is also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the national Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080**.

#### 3.2 COVID-19 Testing Clinics

Canberra Health Services is operating several free testing clinics to make it easier for Canberrans to be tested.

Additionally the GP Respiratory Clinics in the ACT are located in established general practices dedicated to supporting their communities and increasing access to COVID-19 testing. Appointments are required.



A GP Respiratory Clinic is different to a COVID-19 Testing Clinic in that GPs do a full assessment including taking a history, performing an examination, providing testing and treatment. If symptoms are diagnosed as another illness, such as pneumonia, the GP can provide treatment during the appointment, before returning care to the usual GP.

Information about the testing locations can be found via the [ACT COVID-19 website](#).

### 3.3 Changed visitor arrangements at ACT's health facilities

All ACT health facilities and community health centres will ease their visitor restrictions as from Monday 26 October.

This easing has been made possible due to continued health screening, physical distancing, and hand hygiene measures. These are the frontline of our defence against COVID-19 and will continue across all our health facilities.

The new arrangement allows for two visitors per patient, on site per day.

Women who are admitted for care related to birthing may have up to two support persons present.

Patients attending an outpatient or a community health clinic should attend alone wherever possible. If you need support, please limit this to one other person.

The decision to restrict visitors to the ACT's health facilities is always a difficult one, but it ensures the health and safety of everyone is protected. This is especially necessary for Canberra's most vulnerable, particularly patients whose health is already compromised.

Compassionate exceptions to the visitor policy will continue to be determined on a case by case basis however each case must be in consultation with the relevant clinical staff.

When visiting, please use the hand sanitiser supplied and keep your distance from other people whenever possible.

No children visiting patients in hospital where possible.

Before entering any ACT health facilities and community health centres you must complete the screening tool (or you will be refused entry).

To access the screening tool, simply choose one of the following:

- download the ACT Health App and select 'ACT health facilitates screening tool'
- scan the QR code on the health screening posters as you enter a health facility
- fill in your details online at [screening.covid19.act.gov.au](https://screening.covid19.act.gov.au), or
- fill in a form at the screening desk on site.

Show your completed form to screening staff as you enter any ACT health facility

### 3.4 CARE Financial Inc - Help during COVID 19

Care Inc's services are running at full capacity to ensure everyone has access to the vital support they offer.

- Financial counselling services for people experiencing financial difficulty. Call 1800 007 007 or email [admin@carefcs.org](mailto:admin@carefcs.org)
- The Consumer Law Centre for legal advice around credit and debt, consumer and fair trading, and insurance. Call 02 6143 0044 or email [clc.admin@carefcs.org](mailto:clc.admin@carefcs.org)
- Microfinance - No interest loans programs, including a specific program for people who have experienced and left domestic violence. Call 02 6257 1788 or email [microfinanceteam@carefcs.org](mailto:microfinanceteam@carefcs.org)
- Education - for financial capability webinars or to access the \$100 Energy Support Voucher program call Care's education team on 0490008701 or email [education@carefcs.org](mailto:education@carefcs.org)

For community safety, all services are provided online or via phone to ensure that they can continue to provide their high standard of support while observing social distancing guidelines. Care Inc continues to work closely with ACT Community Legal Centres and social services, and can provide appropriate referrals. Please call Care Inc's admin line on 02 6257 1788 for more information on how they can support the ACT community during COVID-19 or visit [www.carefcs.org](http://www.carefcs.org)

### 3.5 Mental Health and COVID-19 Support Services

The BeyondBlue Coronavirus Mental Health Support Service is now online and offers free information, counselling, community forums and referrals online and by phone. It also provides information on topics ranging from coping and wellbeing advice, to digital self-help tools and advice for people, small business owners etc. who have been impacted by COVID-19.

This service can be [accessed online](#) or by calling 1800 512 348.

Other national mental health services that can also be accessed include the websites of [Head to Health](#) and [Life in Mind](#).

Locally, Woden Community Service (WCS) are still operating their mental health programs via telephone and online methods, and are still accepting referrals.

Information about each program can be found via the [WCS website](#). Below are the contact details for each program.

Transition to Recovery (TRec)

Contact: Jayne Tandl on 0409 706 827 or 6221 9511

The Way Back Support Service

Contact: Prue Gleeson 0437 112 483 or 1800 929 222

#### Early Intervention Programs

New Path: An early intervention service, to assist people to tackle severe mental health challenges with associated functional impairment, targeting 18-35 years and up to 64 years.

For an electronic referral form, see: <https://www.wcs.org.au/services/mental-health/new-path>

Contact: Sophie Mayer: 0409 038 194

Next Step: A free and confidential psychological support service provided to people experiencing depression, anxiety, having difficulty adjusting to changes in life circumstances or experiencing grief and loss. Next Step is delivered by coaches who have been trained to deliver this model of psychological therapy. This model is particularly suited to people adjusting to the isolation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. GP and self-referrals is encouraged.

Contact: 6287 8066 (business hours)

The impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of Australians has also been increasingly documented with organisations across the board creating new support resources: Mental Health: ACT & SNSW HealthPathways

### 3.6 Canberra COVID Legal Help

Canberra [COVID Legal Help](#) is a new portal from Canberra Community Law, Economic Justice Australia, CARE Financial Counselling and the Consumer Law Centre.

In their latest video Canberra Community Law has teamed up with Gordon Legal for an information session about Robodebt, the Robodebt Class Action, and Centrelink debt in general. This is great information for anyone who is affected by these issues.

Canberra Community Law's Facebook page has a collection of recent Facebook live videos available for free. There is no need to be subscribed to Facebook to be able to access these videos.

<https://www.facebook.com/canberracommunitylaw/live>